

Pulp Necrosis: A Tooth Can Die Too



The world is laden with instruments and entities that we associate as living things. A field of daffodils or a group of cheetahs, but are you aware of the wondrous choppers in your mouth which are also alive? Human teeth are mostly built out of living cells. Like all things living, any human tooth is also susceptible to decay and potentially results in a 'dead tooth'.

At the core of each tooth lies a bundle of nerves and blood vessels that acts as a pathway of nourishment and sensation to an integral body of a tooth, the pulp chamber. Dental pulp necrosis is a condition that refers to permanent damage to the aforesaid nerves and blood damage. When a tooth is subjected to such a degree of damage, dentists will recommend the removal of affected dead tissue to spare any viable tissue and halt the progression of necrosis.

But, how can you tell if you have a case of dental pulp necrosis that warrants a visit to the dentist?

This guide will help unravel the symptoms of dental pulp necrosis along with prospective treatments you may anticipate at the dental office.

Do I Have a Case of Pulp Necrosis?

The distinct symptom that arises when one enters the last stage of chronic dental pulp inflammation or in this case, pulp necrosis is rather quirky. Before developing a partial or full onset of pulp necrosis, it is common to experience tooth discomfort that alerts issues with the tooth and inner pulp.

For instance, the affected tooth can be especially sensitive to cold food and drinks that initially lasts for 1-2 seconds at a time. Or, an unpleasant smell may emanate from the mouth along with a lingering bad taste in the oral cavity. It is also common for affected individuals to report gum swelling, tooth discoloration, or a pressure sensation upon biting.

Here is the quirky part. Just as swiftly as it arrives, the pain or discomfort will magically disappear. Do not mistakenly assume the temporary comfort as a permanent remedy, however. Instead, be wary as it could indicate that something more serious has taken place at the core of the affected tooth. The lack of nerve endings secondary to tissue death is the culprit behind the misleading relief of pain.

What Can a Dentist Do for Me if I Have a Suspected Pulp Necrosis

Diagnosis

When you arrive at the dentist, they will first perform a full dental exam along with oral X-rays to exclude any cavity or break in the tooth. You can also anticipate the tooth to be tested for viability via the introduction of cold and hot stimuli to examine if it still detects basic sensations.

To further accurately assess the presence of healthy nerves in the tooth, the dentist will also perform an Electric Pulp Test. During this test, the dentist will relay an electrical current to the tooth and assess its level of responsiveness. An absence of reactivity to this test may indicate full pulp necrosis and significant nerve tissue damage.

Treatment

So, what happens after a diagnosis of pulp necrosis is made?

In this case, your dentist will make a referral to dental professionals who specialize in treating the interior of a tooth, or endodontists. As always, the best intervention for the oral cavity is to save a tooth where possible.

Therefore, your endodontists will first perform a root canal procedure where they drill into the affected tooth to remove any dead or infected pulp. The resulting hole in the tooth will be filled and capped with a crown. The last resort to a tooth that is damaged beyond repair is extraction.

Prevention Is the Best Treatment



Pulp necrosis is the last stage of chronic damage to the interior tooth. Daily oral hygiene and seeking early treatments for any arising issue to the teeth and gums are effective prevention methods to prevent the progression of pulp necrosis.

Stay on top of your dental health visits twice a year and help dentists assist you and your loved ones from losing a tooth to pulp necrosis.